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WESTMARC celebrates 16th Best of the West Awards; pays tribute to John F. Long; Herman Orcutt honored with Lifetime Achievement Award; Leland Peterson receives Chairman's Award

Thursday evening WESTMARC honored more than 30 individuals, businesses, and projects in 8 categories as it celebrated its 16th Annual *Best of the West* Awards.

Nearly 800 business and community leaders and elected officials from throughout the valley gathered at the Renaissance Glendale Hotel, Conference & Media Center to share in this year's showcasing of the West Valley's *Best of the West*.

"WESTMARC's *Best of the West* Awards is one of the Valley's premier business events," said Ray Jones, Chairman of WESTMARC's Board of Directors. "But equally important is that it allows us to tell the story of the West Valley and showcase all the grand things that are happening here."

WESTMARC received more than 80 nominations in 8 categories: Architectural Innovation; Arts, Culture, & Entertainment; Attractions, Destinations & Tourism; Building Business; Education; Leadership; Service to Communities; and Sports categories. Nominees were judged and recognized for their outstanding contributions to the image, lifestyle and economic development in western Maricopa County – the portion of Maricopa County west of Interstate 17. (A complete list of award winners and honorable mentions is listed below.)

"Our awards annually recognize what the *Best of the West* in the West Valley is truly all about," said WESTMARC President & CEO Jack Lunsford. "So many exciting things are happening in the West Valley, and there are far too many well kept secrets, so WESTMARC is extremely proud to help illuminate them for everyone. The Awards were again a resounding success!"

Each year one of the highlights of the *Best of the West Awards* is the presentation of the Chairman's Award and the John F. Long Lifetime Achievement Award.

The John F. Long Lifetime Achievement Award "honors a person, organization, business or entity that has exemplified outstanding service by contribution to the lifestyle to Western Maricopa County."

Prior to presenting this year's award WESTMARC paid special tribute to John F. Long, "with special hope of introducing new Valley residents to the vision and legacy of Mr. Long".

Herman Orcutt, principal of The Orcutt Winslow Partnership, received the 2008 John F. Long Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his career as "a major contributor of time and talent to the landscape of the West Valley."

The Chairman's Award is presented to "an individual, organization, or event which is so extraordinary that it merits special recognition".

The 2008 Chairman's Award went to Leland Peterson for his nearly 40 years of leadership at Sun Health demonstrating "exemplary healthcare leadership and always being focused on doing what is RIGHT for the patient."

Jack Lunsford praised both Herman Orcutt and Lee Peterson on behalf of WESTMARC. "Herman Orcutt and Lee Peterson have for decades provided tremendous leadership for the West Valley," Lunsford commented. "And for WESTMARC in particular, their fingerprints are all over our success."

Competition is always high among the *Best of the West* Award entries. A diverse panel of noted and outstanding community leaders chosen from Central Phoenix and the East Valley judges these entries.

"Our judges are critical to the integrity and success of *Best of the West*," said WESTMARC Past Chairman Jay Ellingson. "They are themselves valley leaders and we are most grateful to each of them for their time and commitment in helping WESTMARC honor the accomplishments of the West Valley."

This year's judges include: Maria Harper-Marinick, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Maricopa Community Colleges District; Susan Carlson, Executive Director of Arizona Business & Education Coalition; Kathleen "Katie" Pushor, President & CEO of Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce; Jess Roman, former President and CEO of BNC National Bank and current banking consultant; Edmundo Hidalgo, President & Chief Executive Officer of Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.; Kent Scribner, Superintendent of Phoenix Union High School District; and Dana Wolfe Naimark, President & CEO of Children Action Alliance.

Best of the West is the largest event of its type in the West Valley and one of the biggest in the entire state. Presented by Cox Communications, the Awards event also featured Titanium Sponsors, APS and The Arizona Republic, as well as Platinum Sponsors SCF Arizona and Algodón Center.

Event Gold Sponsors were: The Ellman Companies; TriWest Healthcare Alliance; United Healthcare; and Southwest Airlines.

Event Silver Sponsors were: Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Arizona; DMB/Verrado; Helmholdt Real Estate; McCarthy Building Companies; and Roskamp Sun Health Management and Development. Sixteen Bronze Sponsors and many individual table sponsors rounded out the sponsorships.

2008 BEST OF THE WEST AWARD WINNERS

Architectural Innovation	Westgate City Center
Arts, Culture, and Entertainment	West Valley Arts Council's Big Read
Attractions, Destinations, & Tourism	Arrowhead Towne Center
Building Business – 50 Employees or Less	West Valley National Bank
Building Business – 50+ Employees	Ashley Furniture HomeStore
Education – Higher Ed	ASU Project ASPIRE – Avondale Elementary School District Partnership
Education – K-12	Westside Impact Consortium
Leadership – Individual	John Longabaugh
Leadership - Organization	Sun Health's Nursing Education Training Unit/Pat Green, MSN, RN
Service to Communities – Health	Sun Health Olive Branch Senior Center
Service to Communities – Municipal	City of Peoria Butler Drive Water Reclamation Facility
Service to Communities – Other	Dysart Community Center Laubach Literacy Program
Sports	Superbowl XLII

2008 BEST OF THE WEST HONORABLE MENTIONS

Architectural Innovation (Tie)	Verrado
Architectural Innovation (Tie)	Desert Sky Mall
Arts, Culture, and Entertainment	City of Glendale 25 th Anniversary Jazz & Blues Festival
Attractions, Destinations, and Tourism	City of Glendale X-Court
Building Business—More than 50 Employees	Roskamp Sun Health Management & Development
Education – Higher Ed	Sun Health Research Institute (SHRI) Internship Program
Education – K-12	The Next Step
Leadership – Individual	James Miller
Leadership – Organization (Tie)	Verrado Leadership
Leadership – Organization (Tie)	El Mirage Police Department
Service to Communities – Health	Banner Thunderbird Children’s Center Neonatal Expansion
Service to Communities – Municipal (Tie)	Barrier-Free Waterfall Trail at White Tank Mountain Regional Park
Service to Communities – Municipal (Tie)	The Sanitation Zone
Service to Communities - Other	Bootstrap America
Sports	Goodyear’s Two-Team Expansion of the Cactus League